



**John Engler**  
Governor

**State of Michigan**  
**Department of Agriculture**  
Lansing

**Dan Wyant**  
Director

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** May 18, 2000

**TO:** Persons Interested in Animal Control Officer Training Programs

**FROM:** Steven L. Halstead, D.V.M., M.S., Companion Animal Program Manager

**SUBJECT: Animal Control Officer Pursuant to the Dog Law**

As you are aware, MCL 287.289b states that a county shall not hire a person as an animal control officer unless that person has had 100 hours of training that has been approved by the Michigan Department of Agriculture. The exceptions to this are, one, if the person is a police officer, or two, if the person was employed as an animal control officer for at least three years prior to 1973. Pursuant to MCL 287.289c, the same hiring requirements apply to any city, village, or township hiring an animal control officer.

The reason for this law is to help assure that the animal control officer has had at least a minimal amount of training so that public health and safety and animal welfare are appropriately protected. Recommended areas of training include: laws; policies; law enforcement; investigation techniques; record keeping; design and construction of animal facilities; sanitation of animal facilities; animal behavior; animal handling and restraint; animal diseases including rabies and other zoonotic diseases; animal breed identification and animal description; animal first aid; vehicles and animal transportation; capture techniques; euthanasia techniques including the use of sodium pentobarbital; and public relations.

There are few formal training programs available at this time; therefore, in general, training will be accomplished by having the applicant spend time with and receive instruction from a variety of professionals and specialists. Such people may include the local prosecuting attorney, an animal control officer in a neighboring area, the sheriff or police chief, a Michigan Department of Agriculture Field Inspector, and a veterinary practitioner. A suggested training outline is enclosed. Other suggestions for training include:

- 1 National Animal Control Association (NACA) Training Academy. This program is run through the Law Enforcement Training Institute, School of Law Extension Division, University of Missouri Columbia, 1 800 825 6505, fax (573) 884 5693. The program has two non consecutive levels of training and is held periodically at different locations around the country.
- 2 Michigan Association of Animal Control Officers (MARCO) annual meeting and spring meeting. The annual meeting is generally held in Lansing every September. The spring

meeting is generally held in March at a location other than Lansing, usually in the northern part of the state. The contact person is Joe Maniaci President, MARCO, 21417 Dunham Road, Clinton Township, Michigan, 48036, (810) 469 5115.

- 3 American Humane Association (AHA), Denver, Colorado, 1 800 227 4645. The AHA provides a program periodically in regional areas that show interest. The contact persons are Roxanne Ayala or Samantha Bradley.
- 4 Some local community colleges and high school adult education programs offer courses that would be appropriate for animal control officer training.

If you have specific ideas for training other than those described above or detailed on the attached sheet, please contact the Michigan Department of Agriculture, Animal Industry Division, at (517) 373-1077.

Once training has been completed, the applicant or other appropriate person needs to submit a summary of the training to the department. This summary should include the date training occurred, number of hours spent in training on that date, who did the training, and what was covered in the training. For example:

4-10-2000	Spent half day with current animal control officer, John Doe, reviewing how to identify animals and keep records pursuant to Regulation 151.	4 Hours
4-11-2000	Spent day with Dr. Bill Jones learning to restrain dogs and cats and administer IV injections.	6 Hours
4-12-2000	Rode with Michigan Department of Agriculture Field Inspector, Jane Doe, to visit other facilities. Discussed kennel construction, how to do inspections, Act 287, and Regulation 151.	8 Hours

The department will review the training summary. If the training is not approved, then a letter of disapproval, along with an explanation, will be sent to the applicant. Typical reasons for disapproval are failure to adequately document training and inappropriate or lacking training. Inappropriate training may include self study or a request that 20 hours of cleaning kennels count toward the 100 hours of required training. If the training is approved, then an approval letter will be sent to the applicant. This letter should be kept on file.

If you have any further questions, please contact the Michigan Department of Agriculture. Animal Industry Division, at (517) 373-1077.

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Enclosure